



image

44
MAR DIGITAL EDITION

SPAWN



T. DANIEL
KOVAC
T. BOCKEL

image® COMICS PRESENTS:

"AVENGER"



story

TODD McFARLANE

pencils

TONY DANIEL

inks

KEVIN CONRAD

copy editor

TOM ORZECOWSKI

letters

LOIS BUHALIS

color

TODD BROEKER

ROY YOUNG

a special thanks to

BEAU SMITH

Spawn #43 Summary:

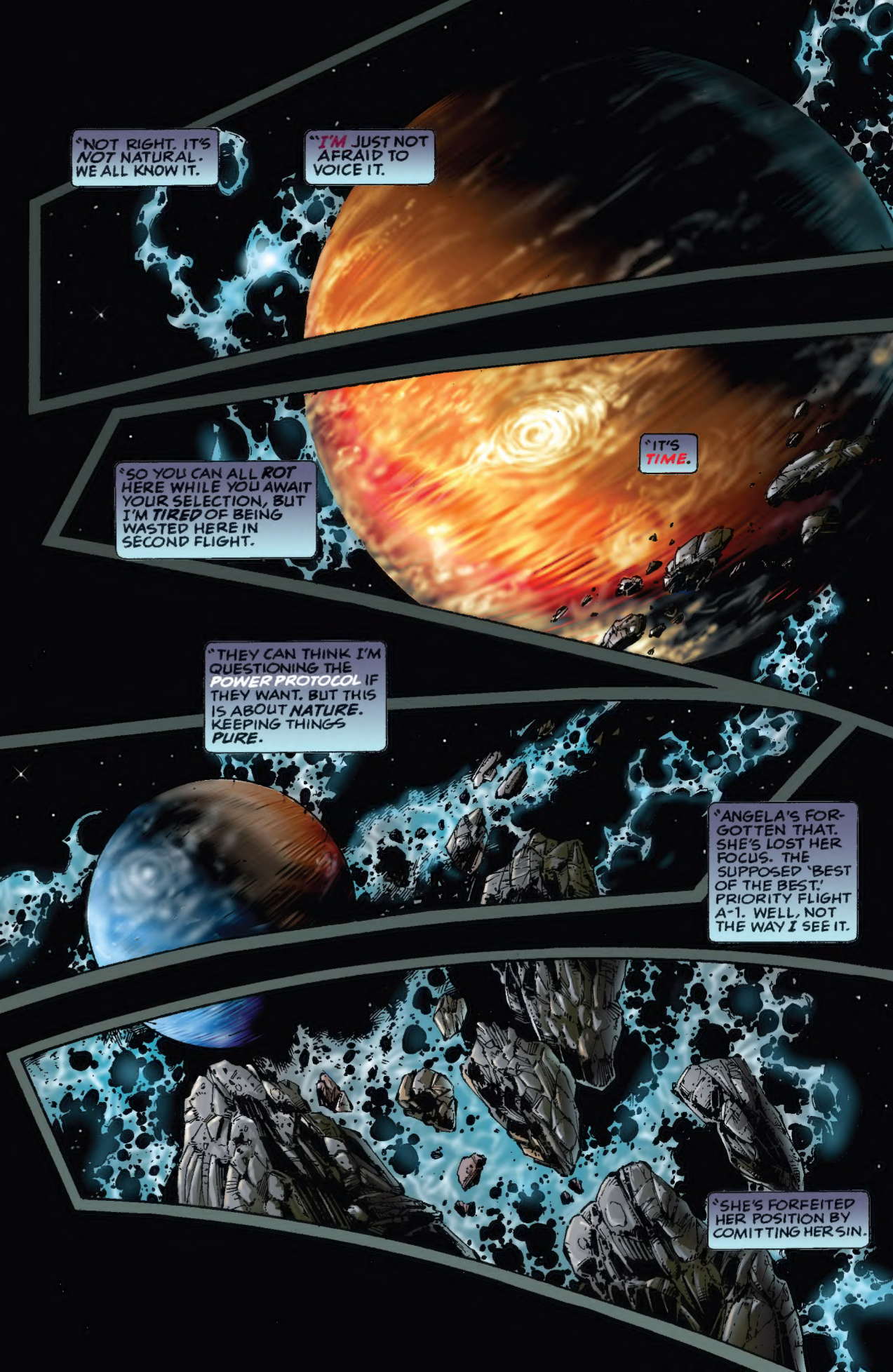
Detectives Burke and Williams, after extensive investigation of Chief of Police Banks, are on the verge of breaking the case wide open. Before they can put the last pieces of the puzzle together, Banks fires them. Now, their hands are forced to take drastic measures, and take his file public. Hearing of this, Wynn orders all support around Banks to be shut down to ensure that Banks will take the fall. When the newspaper hits the stands, Banks, with no one willing to help him out, crumbles under the pressure and takes his own life. Meanwhile, Spawn, slowly rejuvenates himself after surviving the Curse's experiments on him. Getting stronger every day, he recuperates in solitude as he gradually makes his way back to New York.

FOR IMAGE COMICS
LARRY MARDER - exec. director

SPAWN #44, Digital Edition, Published by IMAGE COMICS 1440 N. Harbor Boulevard, Suite 305, Fullerton, CA 92635. Spawn®, its logo and its symbol are Registered Trademarks 1996 of Todd McFarlane Productions, Inc. All other related characters are Trademark™ and Copyright© 1996 Todd McFarlane Productions, Inc. All Rights reserved. Any similarities to persons living or dead is purely coincidental. With the exception of artwork used for review purposes, none of the contents of this publication may be reprinted without the permission of Todd McFarlane.

Director Of Creative Development: TERRY FITZGERALD.
Graphics Coordinator: JULIA SIMMONS.





“NOT RIGHT. IT’S
NOT NATURAL.
WE ALL KNOW IT.”

“I’M JUST NOT
AFRAID TO
VOICE IT.”

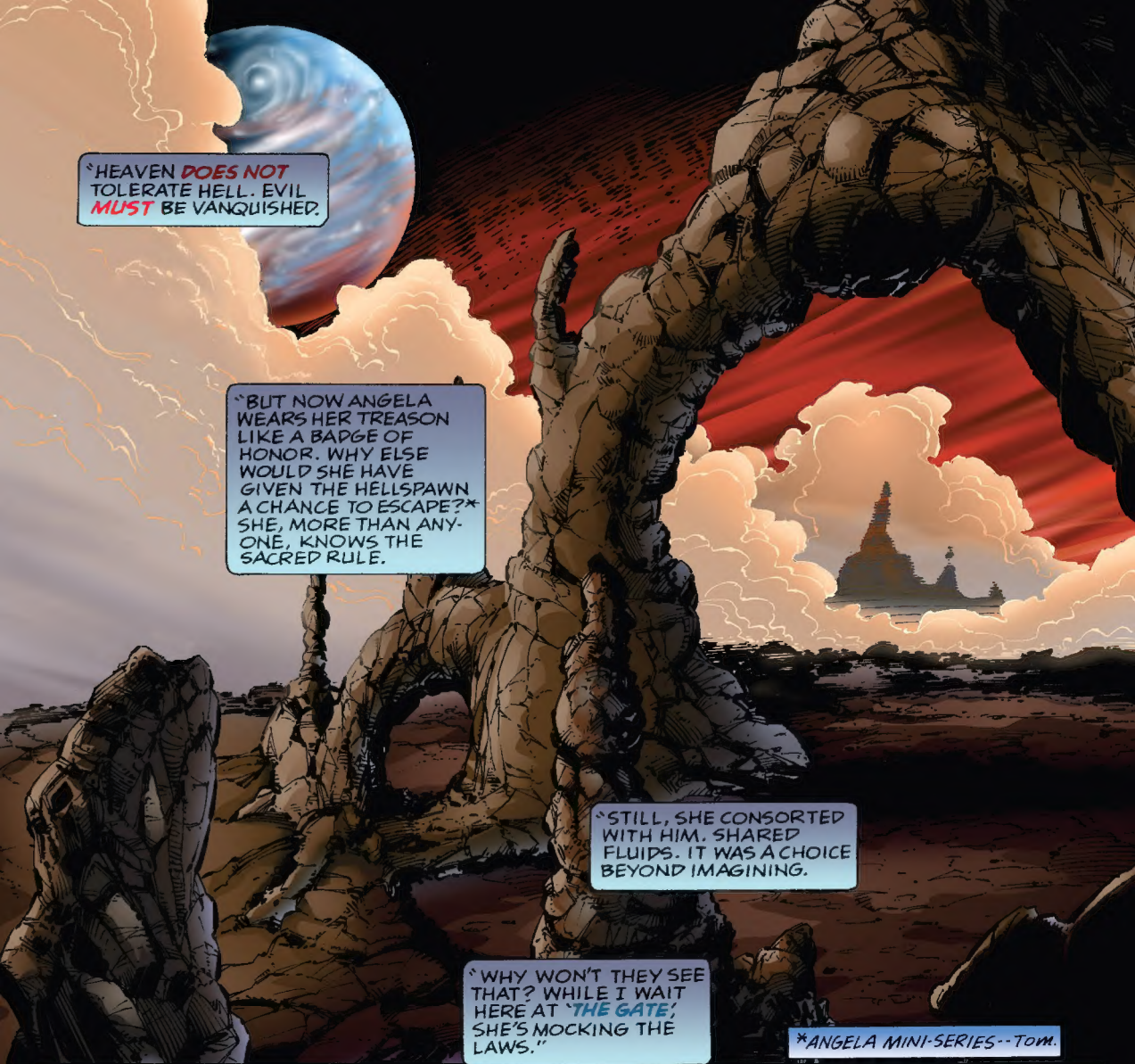
“SO YOU CAN ALL ROT
HERE WHILE YOU AWAIT
YOUR SELECTION, BUT
I’M TIRED OF BEING
WASTED HERE IN
SECOND FLIGHT.”

“IT’S
TIME.”

“THEY CAN THINK I’M
QUESTIONING THE
POWER PROTOCOL IF
THEY WANT. BUT THIS
IS ABOUT **NATURE**.
KEEPING THINGS
PURE.”

“ANGELA’S FOR-
GOTTEN THAT.
SHE’S LOST HER
FOCUS. THE
SUPPOSED ‘BEST
OF THE BEST,’
PRIORITY FLIGHT
A-1. WELL, NOT
THE WAY I SEE IT.”

“SHE’S FORFEITED
HER POSITION BY
COMMITTING HER SIN.”



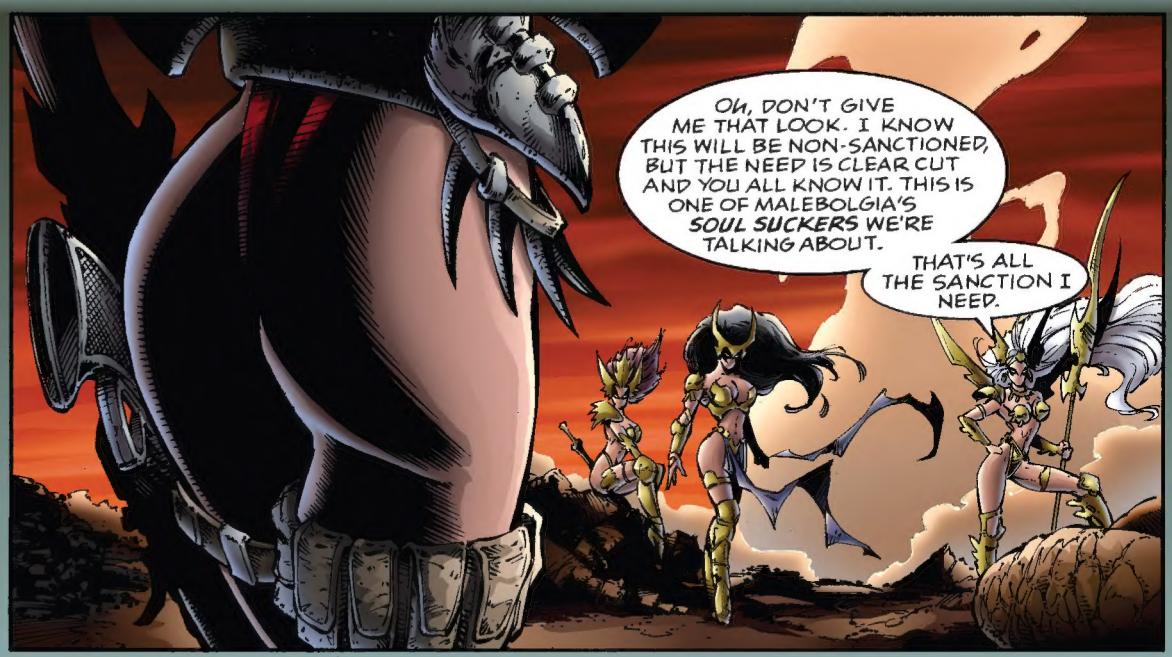
HEAVEN **DOES NOT**
TOLERATE HELL. EVIL
MUST BE VANQUISHED.

BUT NOW ANGELA
WEARS HER TREASON
LIKE A BADGE OF
HONOR. WHY ELSE
WOULD SHE HAVE
GIVEN THE HELLSPAWN
A CHANCE TO ESCAPE? *
SHE, MORE THAN ANY-
ONE, KNOWS THE
SACRED RULE.

STILL, SHE CONSORTED
WITH HIM. SHARED
FLUIDS. IT WAS A CHOICE
BEYOND IMAGINING.


WHY WON'T THEY SEE
THAT? WHILE I WAIT
HERE AT 'THE GATE',
SHE'S MOCKING THE
LAWS."

*ANGELA MINI-SERIES--TOM.




OH, DON'T GIVE
ME THAT LOOK. I KNOW
THIS WILL BE NON-SANCTIONED,
BUT THE NEED IS CLEAR CUT
AND YOU ALL KNOW IT. THIS IS
ONE OF MALEBOLGIA'S
SOUL SUCKERS WE'RE
TALKING ABOUT.


THAT'S ALL
THE SANCTION I
NEED.



THERE'VE NEVER BEEN SCORES HIGHER THAN MINE IN ANY OF THE FLIGHT LEVELS. I PEGGED THE METER IN ALL CATEGORIES. NO ONE ELSE WAS EVEN CLOSE.



I JUST HAVE TO TAKE OUT THIS **SPAWN**. QUICKLY AND WITHOUT MERCY. THEN THE FLIGHT SUPERVISORS WILL SEE I'VE PROVEN MYSELF. THAT I SHOULD BE THE ONE.



AND IF YOU'RE THINKING IT'S TOO LATE, **FORGET IT.** THAT "ZEAL" INDICTMENT FROM PRE-FLIGHT TRAINING NEVER WENT ON MY PERMANENT RECORD. I **RETAINED MY "SHIMMER."**



I'M CLEAN. OFFICIALLY.

I SHATTERED ALL OF ANGELA'S OLD RECORDS. I'M READY TO TAKE HER PLACE AS **PRIORITY A-1.**


DUSK.

THE TRIUMPH OF
DARKNESS OVER THE
RETREATING LIGHT.
THE PASSING OF LIGHT'S
INFLUENCE OVER THE
LAND. WHEN THE
BALANCE BETWEEN
GOOD AND EVIL BEGINS
ITS SHIFT.

SOON SHADOWS WILL
POPULATE THE GROUNDS,
MULTIPLYING WITH EACH
HEARTBEAT. DARKNESS
WILL ONCE AGAIN
TRIUMPH OVER THE
WEAKENING LIGHT,
RELEASING THE SERVANTS
OF NIGHT.


AND SO
THEY
COME.

SEDUCED BY THE TWILIGHT'S
DANCE. FOR THE RITUAL
NECESSITATES THOSE THAT
CARRY THE NOURISHMENT
OF HELL.



THUS DOES THE
DARKNESS
REPLENISH
ITSELF... RECON-
CILING THE LIVING
DEAD IN SOME
BLASPHEMOUS
PARODY OF
PHOTOSYNTHESIS...

TRANSFORMING
THE UNSETTLING
INTO SOMETHING
UNHOLY.



ITS DANCE IS ONE THE
PARASITIC SHROUD
KNOWS WELL.

HOW EXHILARATING,
THE SOUNDS OF THEIR
EAGER APPROACH!



SATAN'S
CHILDREN
SPRING
FORTH.



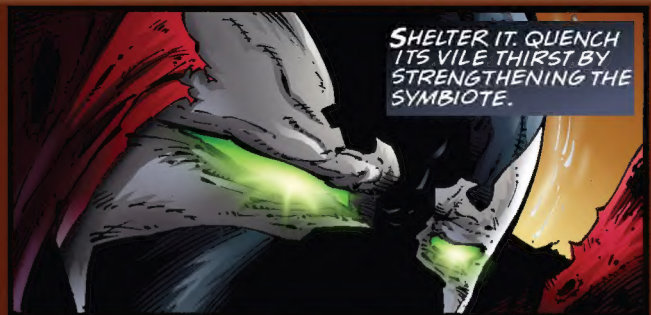
ANTICIPATING THE
MOMENT OF THE
SUN'S BANISHMENT.

THE CREATURES
OF THE DARK.
A BLOOD MOON.
THE SOIL ITSELF.
ALL BRING FORTH
THEIR DARK CACHE
OF EVIL TO THE
SUPPLICANT:
A HELLSPAWN
WEAKENED.



THEY MUST
CONSERVE
THE HOST
BODY.

SHELTER IT. QUENCH
ITS VILE THIRST BY
STRENGTHENING THE
SYMBIOTE.



WORMS. MAGGOTS.
THE DREGS OF A
DARK EARTH WHERE
BONES AND BLOOD OF
THE DEAD ENRICH
THE HUNGRY DIRT.



A RIB-STICKING MEAL
THAT WILL AGAIN
ENMESH THE PROTECT-
IVE LAYER WITH ITS
VESSEL.





THE DANK JUICES SLAKE
THIS MACABRE THIRST,
MOISTENING CRUSTY
LAYERS DAMAGED BY
THEIR RECENT RADICAL
DISMEMBERMENT.

AND SO IT FEEDS, IN A
DEMANDING RITUAL OF
SLATHERING HELL-BLOOD
SPILT CARESSINGLY UPON
THIS UNIFORM OF
DARKNESS...

...GASPING IN THE RUSH OF
ITS HELLISH STIMULATION.

THE BODY CLIMAXES, THE
ORGASMIC WRENCHING
SHOOTING AGONY THROUGH
ITS VIOLATED, SWADDLED
TISSUES.



HE RECEIVES A
CASCADE OF
FLASHING
MOMENTS.

CRIMES AGAINST
THE HOT VESSEL
ARE FLUSHED FROM
MEMORY'S VOID...
IMAGES OF A
ROTTING BODY,
WHERE ONCE
DWELLED A
HEART...

THE EXPERIMENT.
THE EXTRACTION.
THE PAIN.

ALL SPUN
TOGETHER BY
THE CURSE...

... IN A BIZARRE ATTEMPT
TO RETRIEVE HIDDEN
SECRETS THAT MIGHT
ENDOW HIM WITH CON-
TROL OVER **EVIL**.*

HE PAID DEARLY
FOR HIS VENTURE.

FOR THE
SECRETS
ARE
ETERNAL

THEIR MEANING
IS IMPOSSIBLE
TO GRASP.

SO WE REACH
FOR LUCID
THOUGHTS. THOSE
THAT WILL CALM
US AND BRING
COMFORT.

WANDA.

SIR, IT'S,
uh... SOMEWHAT
DARK.

YEAH.
LEMME GET
THE LIGHT
HERE.

CLICK

THANK
YOU,
SIR.

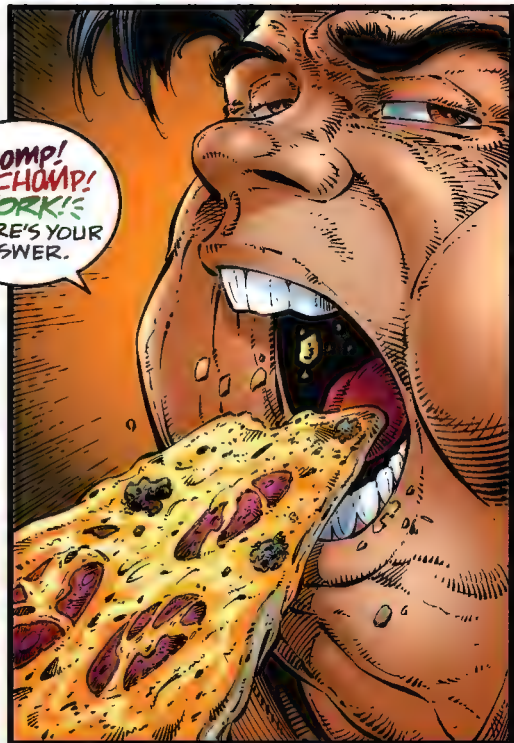
YEAH, SURE.
Hmmm. NOW
WHERE DID I...
Aww! THERE
IT IS!


I'VE GOT
SOME COLD
LEFTOVER PIZZA,
TWITCH. LOTS OF
EXTRA TOPPINGS.
CARE FOR A
SLICE?

Umm...

NO THANKS,
SIR. I'M... NOT
MUCH FOR
"EXTRA"
TOPPINGS.

SUIT
YOURSELF.





HE REACHES IN
DESPERATION
FOR THOUGHTS
TO SOOTHE HIS
INNER AND
OUTER
ANGUISH.

BUT, AS IF
REACTING
TO HIS
ERODED
STATE,
THEY
SCATTER.

CARRIED
AWAY ON
THE WINGS
OF NIGHT.

HIS SACRIFICE WAS
FOR LOVE. NOW THAT
NOBILITY HAS BEEN
TAKEN.

TWISTED.

MUTATED INTO A
SICKENING JOKE
OF CRUELTY AND
PAIN. SEPARATING
HIM EVEN FURTHER
FROM THE ONE HE
CAME BACK FOR.



REALITY...AND
IT'S TOO
BIZARRE TO
BE ANYTHING
OUT...

...REALITY THEN REARS
ITS FUZZY HEAD.






IT DOES
LAST
LONG.

CAUGHT AGAIN IN
THE MIDDLE OF
SOME HELLISH
FEEDING RITUAL,
AL SIMMONS CAN
FEEL A KINETIC
FLOW FROM
CREATURE TO
COSTUME.

A WAY FOR
EACH HELL-
SPAWN TO
MAINTAIN ITS
K-READINGS...

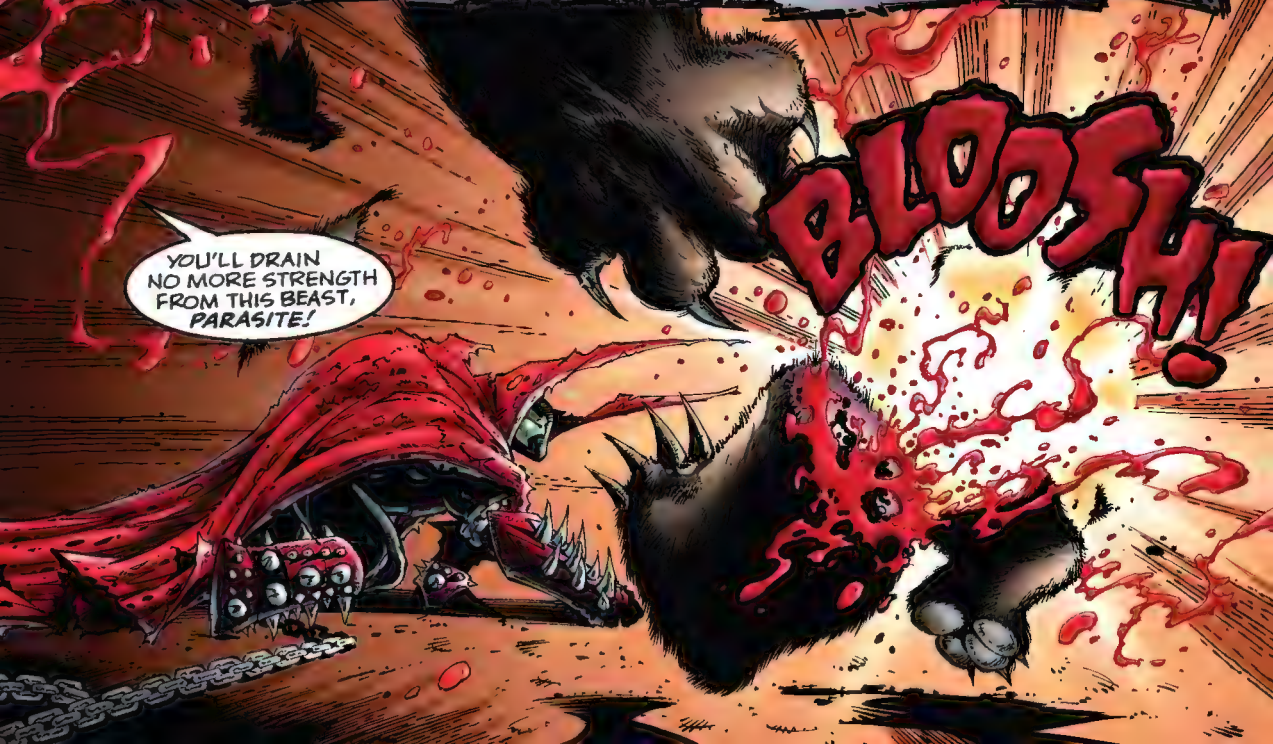
BLACK ENERGY
TRANSFERRAL
IS WHAT THE
SPAWN, HUNTING
MANUAL LABELS
IT.

A METHOD TO
JUMP-START
ITSELF WITH ITS
ENVIRONMENT'S
EVIL.




BUT THE LINK SHATTERS.
THE GREAT BEAR SENSES
A PRESENCE IN THE
SHADOWS.

IT MOVES
TOWARD THE
INTRUDER.



YOU'LL DRAIN
NO MORE STRENGTH
FROM THIS BEAST,
PARASITE!

BLOOSH!



YOUR SYMBIOTE'S LEVELS ARE OBVIOUSLY EBBING. THAT'S GOOD. PERFECT! THE HEAVENS ARE SMILING ON ME TO FIND YOU IN RECHARGE. THIS SHOULDN'T TAKE LONG.

YOU SEE, HELL-SCUM, YOUR TOUCH HAS CONTAMINATED WHAT WAS ONCE PURE, SPOILING ONE WHO WAS DEVOTED TO GOOD. NOW SHE'S TAINTED. LIKE YOU. YOU'RE BOTH GOING TO BURN NOW. YOU AND YOUR ONCE HEAVENLY CONCUBINE...

ANGELA!

ANGELA?

YOU I UNDERSTAND. WHY YOU SOIL THE GOODNESS YOU TOUCH. YOUR MASTER LORDS OVER ALL HE CREATES. BUT ANGELA...

SHE HAS NO EXCUSE.

SHE KNOWS BETTER!



CHANK!

SHE IS
NO LONGER ONE
OF THE PURE.
NOW SHE'S A
HELLCAST!

THE
NEXT STEP
TO
HELLSPAWN.

THAT'S IT,
FIGHT!!

I'VE
WAITED TOO LONG
TO HAVE YOU
COWER NOW,
DEMON!




SO
GET
UP!

YOU,
COSTUME--USE
YOUR HOST'S
INTELLIGENCE.
HIS WAR
INSTINCTS.

IF I'M
TO DEFY MY
SUPERIORS,
IT MUST BE FOR
AN EXTREME
CAUSE.

THAT'S
YOU.





YOUR
DEATH WILL
GET ME INSIDE
THE HOLY
WALLS.

SO YOU'RE
SOME KIND OF
ANGEL, IS THAT IT?
LIKE ANGELA.
WANTING A
TROPHY FOR
YOUR
SHOWCASE.

WELL,
SCREW
YOU.

KEEP
PUSHING. PLEASE.
I'VE SEEN THE DAMAGE
MY ARMOR CAN
INFLECT WHEN
IT WANTS.

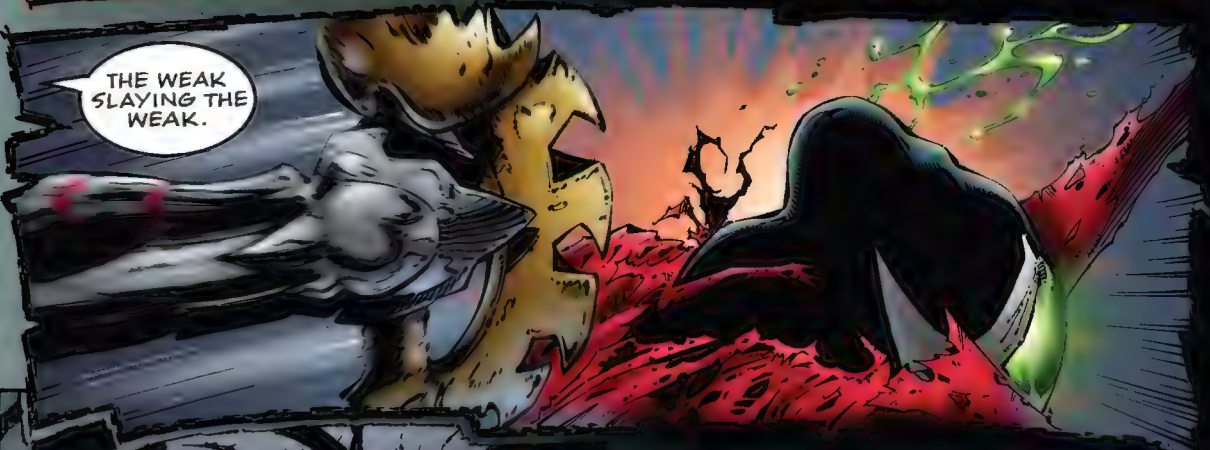
YOU
JUST HAVE TO
TRIGGER
IT.

BRAVE TALK, OR
MAYBE JUST A BLUFF?
YOU'RE WEAK. WE
BOTH KNOW THAT.
YOUR SYMBIOTE'S
NOT PREPARED.


I
WONDER IF
THIS IS HOW
ANGELA
CONQUERED
SO MANY.



USING WEAK-KILLS
TO PAD HER REPUTATION.
I KNEW HER VICTORIES
WERE OVERSTATED.




THE WEAK
SLAYING THE
WEAK.



NO
WONDER YOU
'FOUND' EACH
OTHER.

YOU'RE BOTH
ABOMINATIONS--



--WHOSE
TRANSGRESSIONS
SCREAM FOR
UNHOLY
PUNISHMENT.

HEAAAHHHHHHEEHEEHA

I JUST
LOVE

SOME
ANGRY LITTLE VIXEN
BEATIN' SIMMONS LIKE
A MAGGOT-HEADED
STEP CHILD.

HE'S TOO
STUPID TO EVEN
KNOW HOW
SCREWED
HE IS...

HEHHHEEHA-
HARRRRHRT

Heh-heh!
...WITH HEAVEN
SQUEEZING
HIM ON ONE END AND
HELL ON THE OTHER.
VERY SOON, DEAR
SPAWNIE, YOU'RE
GONNA POP LIKE A
PUS-FILLED
CANKERING BOIL.

HARRHHH!
THIS
IS FAR TOO
GOOD!

BLAAAHAAHHA

IT'S
GOTTA BE
MY FRIGGIN'
BIRTHDAY!

FLIQUISHHH!
FLAQUASHHH!

YEARRGH!

THIS IS
BETTER THAN
EATING BARBEQUED
CRIPPLES ON A
CRUTCH!

VOOPHH...
Errr...

BURP!

Ooh... THAT HIT THE
BLACK SPOT. AND THE
BEST PART ABOUT IT?
OUR PAL AL HASN'T
BEGUN TO FEEL THE
CRAP I'M ABOUT
TO HEAP ON HIM.

MATTER OF
FACT, THEY'RE
ALL A BUNCH OF
BONEHEADS.

ISN'T
THAT RIGHT,
GUYS?

♪ I'VE GOT WANDA,
TERRY, GRANNIE ALL
TERRY, THE CHINNY-
BY THE CHINNY-
WYNN-
WYNN!

JASON
WYNN, MY BOY,
YOU'RE DOING
ME PROUD.

TIME TO
CELEBRATE.
I DESERVE A
TREAT.

NOW
WHERE CAN
I FIND ME
SOME
PUPPIES TO
KICK...?

IS IT
SECONDS?

MINUTES?

HOURS?

REALITY HAS
BLURRED.

AND THEN...
AS HE
REGAINS SOME
FOCUS...

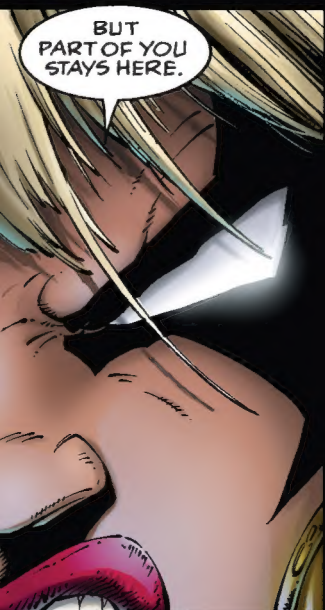




IT'S OVER,
HELLSPAWN.



I'M
SENDING YOU
BACK TO YOUR
DARK
MASTER.



BUT
PART OF YOU
STAYS HERE.



YOUR
HEAD.



DECAPITATION.



THE ONLY WAY
TO PERMANENTLY
KILL AN
UNDEAD.



I'LL
MAKE SURE
ANGELA
HOLDS IT
BEFORE **SHE**
DIES!





Tyrant
Lizard
King

EMPIRE